

NSC BRIEFING

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VENEZUELA

29 January 1958

OK/RAA

I. Venezuela's governing junta has restored relative calm. It has won considerable popular support and at least the temporary backing of the military.

A. The junta is composed of 3 officers and 2 civilians.

B. The junta's cabinet is predominantly civilian.

II. Many stringent controls have relaxed. And the establishment of constitutional government and free elections are scheduled within about 18 Months. But there are many difficulties ahead.

A. The two leftist parties, Democratic Republican Union (URD) and Democratic Action (AD), may object to the slowness of this timetable.

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B. The three major non-Communist parties, ~~the~~ ^C Christian (OPEI), may find it difficult to work together.

C. The military ~~may be reluctant~~ ^{will not} to accept a non-political role.

III. The Communists (PCV) were prominent in the ouster of Perez.

A. The outlawed PCV, with an estimated (9,000 members) has a considerable political potential.

IV. The junta has guaranteed foreign property and investments.

A. But non-Communist leaders agreed when in exile that the 1956/57 oil concessions granted by Perez were illegal and should be renegotiated.

B. These concessions were the first since 1945.

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